

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

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----- 059251

P R 020858Z MAY 74

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 956

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

UNCLAS BAGHDAD 0284

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFIN, IZ

SUBJECT: CASE OF GEORGE GHANTOUS

REF: STATE 85948; BAGHDAD 256

1. WHILE ATTENDING COURT APRIL 30 AND MAY 2 AS OBSERVER, ADMIN OFFICER MAIN LEARNED COURT DESIRED CONFIRMATION OF STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN BELGIAN EMBASSY USINT NOTE 17 OF MARCH 4, 1971. COPY FORWARDED TO DEPT VIA BRUSSELS UNDER TRANSMITTAL SLIP OF MARCH 4, 1971. PERTINENT PART OF NOTE FOLLOWS:

2. " AFTER A RECENT AUDIT MADE BY TWO OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED OFFICERS, EMBASSY IS NOW IN A POSITION TO STATE THAT EMBEZZLEMENTS AND FALSE STATEMENTS MADE BY MR. GHANTOUS RESULTED IN A TOTAL SHORTAGE OF IRAQI DINARS 38,046.357. EMBASSY KINDLY REQUESTS MFA TO BRING ABOVE TO PROPER AUTHORITIES' ATTENTION." COPY OF NOTE POUCHED BF/FS.

3. MAIN WAS INFORMED CONFIRMATION SHOULD BE PRESENTED IN LETTER IN ARABIC SIGNED BY OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE WHO ALSO MUST STATE CONTENTS ORALLY TO COURT. NO OATH IS REQUIRED. TEXT SUGGESTED BY BELGIAN EMBASSY: "POSITION OF THE BELGIAN EMBASSY REGARDING THE CASE OF MR. GEORGE LUTF GHANTOUS IS PRESENTED IN THE EMBASSY'S DIPLOMATIC NOTE 17 OF MARCH 4, 1971. THE EMBASSY HAS NOTHING FURTHER TO ADD AT THIS TIME. (SIGNED) P.O. (PRO ORDRE) RAYMOND VAN ROY, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF BELGIUM, BY RONALD L. MAIN, UNCLASSIFIED

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SECON SECRETARY."

4. MFA APPOINTED LAWYER FOR ALL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS PROVIDED TRANSLATION GRATIS. HE ADVISED MAIN THAT GHANTOUS HAS CONFESSED EMBEZZLEMENT AND NO FURTHER PROOF REQUIRED TO PROSECUTE FOR SENTENCING BY IRAQI PUBLIC PROSECUTOR.

5. WE ARE CONSULTING WITH BELGIAN CHARGE. NEXT COURT APPOINTMENT IS MAY 7. IF DEPT WISHES TO MEET COURT REQUEST BY CONFIRMING NOTE OF MARCH 4, 1971, SHOULD IT BE DONE BY BELGIAN EMBASSY OR U.S. INTERESTS SECTION OF THE BELGIAN EMBASSY? LOWRIE

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